

ICED Meeting Minutes

130 W. Mason, Room 104, Springfield

100 W. Randolph, Chicago

February 5, 2014

1:30 pm

Attendance

Rocco J. Claps/Director, Department of Human Rights/Susan Allen, member designee/present

Michelle R.B. Saddler/Secretary, Department of Human Services/Francisco Alvarado/Mike Parvis, Dept. of Human Services, Member designee/present (videoconferencing)

Garrett FitzGerald/ Chair, Civil Service Commission member/Andrew Barris/designee/absent

Erica Borggren/Director, Department of Veteran Affairs/ Fee Habtes, member designee/absent

Simone McNeil/Acting Director, Department of Central Management Services/Wendy Butler, member designee, present

Debbie Johnson–Small/Department of Human Services, Employee member, present (telephone)

Catherine Collier, Employee Member/present (telephone)

Karl Moulton, Employee Member/absent

Brandy Hayes, Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing/present

Robert Griffith, Department of Human Services/present

Fred Stewart/Central Management Services/present

Sue Masten, Department of Human Services/ present (telephone)

William Bogdan, Secretary of State/present (telephone)

Margaret Harkness, Council on Developmental Disabilities/present (videoconferencing)

Jason Brewer, Department of Natural Resources/present

Caroline Alamillo, Department of Employment Security/via telephone/present

Wanda Satkas, Department of Human Services/present (videoconferencing)

Lori Tinsley, Illinois State Treasurer’s Office/present (telephone)

Robert Griffith, Department of Human Services

Mark Heller/Center for Disability & Elder Law/Present (videoconferencing)

Annie Thompson, Lieutenant Governor’s Office, present (telephone)

Jacob Hickey/Guest/Public/, present (videoconferencing)

Eric Cozzolino, Former ICED Intern/Guest/present

Teresita Gonzalez, Dept. Children Family Services/present (telephone)

Toni Grimes – Department of Human Services, Note Taker (telephone)

Oteria Britton, Secretary of State’s Office

Susan Allen began the meeting after she established there were enough members present for a forum. The meeting began at 1:35 p.m. Everyone present and on the phone introduced themselves.

Approval of December 4, 2013 Minutes

Fred Stewart moved that the minutes from the December meeting be approved with the following correction under Other Business: ICED has been contracted by Equip for Equality regarding an inquiry from an employee who is blind who tried to complete the CMS 100B and could not “due to” this form not being accessible. Francisco Alvarado seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Work Group Reports

Awards Committee

Discussion was held regarding having a caterer with a disability Susan Shaw give a demonstration on how she prepares food. There is \$1,000 available to pay for her catering the ICED awards ceremony in a Springfield Center for Independent Living (SCIL) account that was raised from candy bar sales by Dan Dickerson and his Disability Awareness efforts. Due to the untimely passing of Dan Dickerson, Susan followed up with Pete Roberts, SCIL Executive Director, to see if the funds can be obtained. Mr. Roberts believes it is a good idea. In order to disperse these funds, he would like a letter stating these funds were provided to ICED. This money was raised through the efforts of Dan during National Disability Employment Awareness Month. SCIL is not asking ICED to do anything, they just want a letter to release the funds.

A question was raised whether the Board of Ethics should be sought. Debbie Johnson Small, ICED’s Ethics Officer, stated that in the past the Board of Ethics has not provided helpful direction. They left it pretty much up to the group utilizing funds. Follow up will be done on utilization of this money. Jason Brewer made a motion to seek the funds through a letter to SCIL, after an opinion has been sought from the Board of Ethics. Fred Stewart seconded it. The following votes of yes were cast by: Susan Allen, Francisco Alvarado, Wanda Satkas voting for Catherine Collier (who on the authorized Wanda to cast her vote), and Debbie Johnson Small. Wendy Butler voted Present. The motion was passed. Jason will follow-up on this issue with the Board of Ethics.

There will be an Awards Committee meeting immediately following today’s ICED meeting. The Award ceremony will be held in late May. The tentative dates for the ceremony are: May 20, 21, and 22 at the Historic Preservation Agency Building.

Affirmative Action

Susan gave a brief update regarding the status of affirmative action for people with disabilities. The number of employees with disabilities decreased by 108 individuals in the second quarter of FY 2014, and total state employees decreased by 692. The percentage of employees with disabilities decreased from 7.49 to 7.35%. The Department of Human Rights’ goal for agencies in this area is 4.4%, and the Office of Contract Compliance Programs set a nationwide goal for federal contractors of even percent.

Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities

Sue Masten stated that letters are going out to several entities to try to get students interviewed. Letters have been updated for the Governor, Rehabilitation Counselors, schools, etc. So far, nothing has been sent to the Governor. However, everything is moving forward to implement the program.

The Tollway had a vacancy for an intern with a disability. A question was raised regarding how many students is the Internship program shooting for? Susan stated that the goal is as many interns as possible, however, the most placed at any one time in the past was seven. They are hoping for paid internships. DHS hasn't had an intern for a number of years. Sue stated she has worked with some supervisors to get students placed. The U.S. Department of Labor does not like unpaid internships. The Illinois State Police generally does not pay its interns. It is a good program but difficult to place students in. The committee was asked to keep in mind that the intent of the internship program is for students to acquire valuable work skills they can place on a resume to assist them with obtaining employment.

Erik Cozzolino gave a brief overview of his experience while he was an ICED intern. He said that being an intern helped him decide on his career. He spoke of his experience while working with the Tollway and as a Rehabilitation Coordinator with DHS. He talked about his frustration about obtaining promotional opportunities within DHS. There was brief discussion about how promotions are obtained. Factors effecting promotions in state government are Upward Mobility, Seniority, Job Qualifications/Skills, and whether there is an Upward Mobility list for the job.

CMS does not explain their grading method when they issue grades. However, applicants can contact one of the five regional CMS offices to appeal their grading decision. Mike Parvis said that he was unaware you could file an appeal and asked exactly where the appeal information is located. It was stated this information is in the body of the letter accompanying the grade. Jason Brewer stated he has appealed a grade he received with success. He submitted a narrative and received a new grade. Jacob Hickey asked if during the grading process is a person's disability taken into consideration and is the test tailored to their (hard of hearing/vision) disability. It was stated that it is not.

Oteria Britton, of the Secretary of State's Office, said she has seen other people receive promotions while she has been trying for quite some time to obtain one without success. The question was raised is it possible for Rehabilitation Counselors to assist individuals seeking promotions. Mike Parvis explained that most Rehabilitation Counselors would be hesitant to do this because the case would have to be opened in Post Employment. This is a deterrent because they are already working and the Rehabilitation Counselor's primary focus is helping people obtain employment. Applicants must have the required qualifications listed on the job specifications to acquire a promotion.

Education/Training

Upcoming webinars will be held on February 26, and March 24th. The ICED committee is encouraging anyone with a disability to participate. Rachel Weisberg, of Equip for Equality will be speaking about the employees' rights. A note will be sent to agency supervisors inviting staff to participate in these webinars. Mike Parvis asked about the length of these webinars. Each webinar is expected to last about two hours.

Publications/Website

Mike Knepler resigned and is no longer available to work on the ICED website. Mike Scott, of DHS, informed Susan Allen that DHS does not have the time to manage the website. He suggested that CMS be approached about managing the website. ICED wrote Acting Director McNeil, of CMS, about this, but hasn't heard back yet.

Other Business

The CMS 100B application is in the process of being made accessible to a screen reader, but no expected date for completion has been provided.

The FY 2013 annual report is in the process of being prepared by Drew Hernandez.

There is an ICED Vacancy available. Susan Allen has been in contact with the Governor Office on appointments. There are several possible candidates for this appointed position. Two of them are state employees. We are just awaiting the Governor's appointment.

Jacob Hickey was given the final remaining minutes to speak to the committee. He stated that he was a former DRS employee as well as an AFSCME steward. He stated that he was dismissed and was concerned that he was not provided with an interpreter through prior to his dismissal. This was of concern to him. It is the employee's responsibility to request the accommodation they need. It is not the employer's responsibility to provide a specific accommodation, merely an effective one.

On a voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:35 pm.

Submitted by,

Toni Grimes